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Data from a 1962 nationwide survey and from studies in various states describe the economic situation of school dropouts and list factors related to dropping out of school. The rate of unemployment for school dropouts was twice as high as for high school graduates. Dropouts were concentrated in farm and nonfarm laboring jobs; a few were craftsmen or white-collar workers. The proportion of nonfarm workers who worked only part-time because of economic reasons was 16 percent for dropouts compared with 4 percent for graduates. Unemployment for nonwhite graduates was higher than for white graduates.

Findings from various state studies showed that family characteristics were closely related to dropping out of school. Greater proportions of dropouts came from families of low status and low income, from families where parents failed to complete high school, and from broken families. Retardation in school is closely linked to dropping out of school. Students retarded a year or more when they enter ninth grade are likely to withdraw before graduation. In an Iowa investigation, six types of predisposing factors associated with dropping out of school included difficult school programs, lack of acceptance, disruptive home situations, financial needs, inadequate school programs and engagement or marriage. In a Louisiana study, lack of interest or motivation was the key factor for dropping out of school. Most of the youth who dropped out felt that nothing would have kept them in school. For many dropouts in rural areas of Louisiana, conflicts in norms for behavior between school and home contributed to feelings of insecurity and alienation from school and the consequent dropping out of school as a means of resolving these conflicts.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL DROPOUTS

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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Alamosa

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CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL DROPOUTS

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ABSTRACT

Data from a 1962 nationwide survey and from studies in various states describe the economic plight of school dropouts and some factors related to dropping out of school. The rate of unemployment in October (1962) for 1962 school dropouts was 29 percent, about twice as high as for June high school graduates. Compared with graduates, dropouts were concentrated in farm and nonfarm laboring jobs, and fewer were craftsmen or white-collar workers. The proportion of nonfarm workers who worked only part-time because of economic reasons -- often a characteristic of low status occupations -- was 16 percent for 1961 dropouts, compared with 4 percent for 1961 graduates. Unemployment for nonwhite graduates was noticably higher than for white graduates, but among dropouts rates were greater but about equal for white and nonwhite youth.

Findings from various state studies show that school size is not clearly related to dropout rates, but family characteristics are closely related to dropping out of school. Greater proportions of dropouts came from low status and low income families; most of their parents failed to complete high school; and a greater proportion of their families were broken. Retardation in school is closely linked to dropping out of school. Students retarded a year or more when they enter ninth grade are likely to withdraw before graduation. In an Iowa investigation, six major types of predisposing factors associated with dropping out of school were: school too difficult, lack of acceptance, disruptive home situations, financial needs, school program inadequate, and engagement or marriage.

In a Louisiana study, lack of interest or motivation clearly was the key factor given by youth for dropping out of school. Most of these youth who dropped out felt that nothing would have kept them in school. For many dropouts in rural areas of Louisiana, conflicts in norms for behavior between school and home contributed to feelings of insecurity and alienation from school and to dropping out of school as a means of resolving these conflicts. A Kentucky study compared occupational achievement and other characteristics of graduates and dropouts in two settings, eastern Kentucky and southern Ohio. Effects of dropping out of school varied in the two locales.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL DROPOUTS

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Relatively little has been written on the characteristics and problems of youth who drop out of school in rural areas in the United States. However, from what we know about the problems of rural dropouts, they do not differ greatly from those of youth in urban areas. The typical dropout or potential dropout is not necessarily less intelligent than his peers, and it is significant that it is not necessarily the less intelligent who leave school before graduation. Many dropouts have histories of poor achievement in school. They become discouraged with their academic failures, leading to disinterest in school and eagerness to enter the labor force even though ill-equipped and trained for any specific job. While in school, they usually do not participate in the extracurricular activities. He frequently has an erratic attendance record; his relationships with teachers are poor; and he shows resistance and hostility to school authority. He often is retarded in his school work by at least two years. His parents often place little value on education and school achievement.

This paper attempts to define national, regional, and state variations in characteristics of rural versus urban dropouts; makes some rural - urban comparisons related to school dropouts; and presents some factors unique to rural areas that influence dropout rates such as lack of public transportation, rural - urban educational and status differences, ethnic influences, and parental attitudes toward education in rural areas. Portions of eight major studies on rural school dropouts are used for these purposes.

SOME NATIONAL STATISTICS

Over one-half of the 3,068 counties in the United States have 60 percent or more of their population residing in rural areas. Twenty percent or 6.2 million of the Nation's public school enrollment comes from such areas. The Bureau of the Census reports that in 1959, 1,308,000 of the total youth population, ages 6-17, were not enrolled in school.

Significant findings on farm and nonfarm high school graduates and dropouts are reported by Jacob Schiffman in a recent review. 1/ Data presented in this report relate to persons 16 to 24 years of age in the civilian noninstitutional population in the calendar week ending October 13, 1962. The number of school dropouts in 1962 includes only those who left school between January and October, the month of the survey. The high school graduating class of June 1962 numbered about 1,850,000. A slightly higher proportion of the graduates were women (53 percent) than men.

The survey sustains earlier findings showing the less favorable labor

market position of school dropouts compared with high school graduates. Furthermore, the situation for dropouts can be expected to worsen in the coming years, because little growth or some decline is expected in occupations with low educational and skill requirements, and workers without a high school diploma will have increasing difficulty entering expanding occupations where educational and training qualifications are high.

In addition to their educational handicap, many school dropouts suffer in the job market because of their extreme youth. Of the approximately 300,000 young people 16-24 years of age in October 1962 who dropped out of school between January and October, about three-fourths were either 16 or 17 years old. only one-fifth of the June graduates were this age, while three-fifths of the graduates were 18 years old.

The rate of unemployment for 1962 school dropouts in October was 29 percent, about twice as high as the rate for the June high school graduates. (This ratio also held true when the comparison was limited to white dropouts and graduates or to men.)

The unemployment rate in October 1962 for those who dropped out of school in 1960 was 18 percent-- smaller than the 29 percent rate for recent dropouts of 1962, but still considerably above the 10 percent rate for graduates of 1960. Similarly, young men who dropped out of school in 1960 were more likely than recent dropouts to be craftsmen and operatives, whereas fewer were relatively unskilled service workers; however, compared with male graduates who also left school in 1960, the dropouts were more concentrated in farm and nonfarm laboring jobs, and fewer were craftsmen or white-collar workers. The proportion of nonfarm workers who worked part time because of economic reasons--often a characteristic of their occupations--was 16 percent for 1961 school dropouts compared with only 4 percent for the 1961 graduates.

Information obtained for the first time on the years of school completed by dropouts shows that those who left school at a later grade had higher level occupations than those with less education. Of all white 16-to 24-year-old male dropouts employed in October, 1962, 37 percent of those who had completed only elementary school or less were farm laborers and another 17 percent were nonfarm laborers, compared with only 7 and 12 percent, respectively, for those completing 1 to 3 years of high school. Moreover, the proportion of craftsmen was noticeably smaller among the dropouts with less education. Among white female dropouts, those who had not finished at least one year of high school were more likely to be domestic workers or farm laborers and less likely to be clerical or sales workers.

NONWHITE GRADUATES AND DROPOUTS

Nonwhites comprised one out of four of the 1962 school dropouts, about twice their proportion of the June 1962 graduates. Among both high school graduates and dropouts in the labor force in October 1962, nonwhites were much more likely to be in less skilled and less desirable occupations and more of them, partly as a result of their occupations, were unemployed. Of these persons who graduated between 1960 and 1962, about one-half of the nonwhite graduates, but only one-fifth of the white graduates, were in a service occupation

(including private household) or were farm or nonfarm laborers. Among dropouts, fully three-fourths of the nonwhite youths, compared with two-fifths of the white youths, were in these occupational groups. The unemployment rate for nonwhite graduates was noticeably higher than for white graduates, but among dropouts, rates were about equally high for both white and nonwhite youths. (Nonwhite dropouts include a larger proportion in farm areas, where unemployment is comparatively low. These rates are based on relatively small numbers; however, data from previous surveys substantiate these figures.)

Furthermore, nonwhites failed to improve their economic position over a period of time as much as white youth. Comparing the October 1962 jobs of young people who last attended school before 1960 and of these who left school between 1960 and 1962, the proportion of graduates and dropouts in service and laboring jobs dropped off noticeably for the older white youth but remained approximately the same for the older as for the younger nonwhites. Fewer of the earlier than of the recent nonwhite graduates were farm laborers, but more were in service occupations. There also was some increase in the proportion employed as craftsmen and as professional and technical workers among the earlier graduates. Rates of unemployment for nonwhite graduates and dropouts remained relatively high even after they had been out of school several years, while the rates for older white graduates and dropouts declined sharply.

DROPOUTS AND TRAINING NEEDS

In writing about young workers with reference to the training needs of youth in rural areas, Feldman and Peevez stressed the following facts. 2/

Approximately 12 million youngsters under the age of 18 were in families whose total money income was less the $3,000 in 1961. This income is considerably below the minimum family budget considered as "modest but adequate" by the Department of Labor for a family of four in large cities in the United States.

Many of these young persons in low-income families leave school before completing their education in order to supplement the family income. When they enter the labor market with less than a high school education, they ofter enter dead-end jobs requiring little education or skill. A large number of these youths come from families whose fathers had not progressed beyond a grade school education. Many of these youngsters, because they come from low-income families which barely have enough for subsistence and because they have fathers with little education, will repeat the pattern of low income associated with little education.

Nonwhite youths face greater employment problems than do other young workers. In 1962, about one out of every four nonwhite teenagers in the labor force was unemployed, compared with about one out of every eight white teenagers.

Most of the teenagers now growing up in rural-farm areas will not find farm jobs when they enter the labor market. The majority of rural youths face

a choice of underemployment on farms or in rural areas and small towns or movement to urban areas for employment. Many young persons on the farms are fully employed only during the relatively short peak seasons of work. For the rest of the year, they work on a part-time basis and do not fully utilize their potential.

Because of the lack of employment opportunities on the farms or in rural areas and small towns, the large-scale migration of youths from rural to urban areas has continued. In 1950, there were 9.5 million young people in the 10-19 age group in rural areas. By 1960, when these individuals were 20-29 years old, they numbered only 6.1 million, a 36 percent decline. A much larger proportion of nonwhite than of white youngsters are leaving rural areas. In 1950, about 1.3 million nonwhite young persons aged 10 through 19 were living in rural areas. By 1960, when this age group was 20-29 years old, there were only 642,000 in rural areas, a drop of 52 percent. The corresponding decline for white youths in rural areas was only 33 percent. Many of the 700,000 nonwhite youths who moved to urban areas were poorly equipped to meet the changing and more complex job requirements in urban centers.

A large proportion of these individuals lacked the training to compete for jobs in large metropolitan labor markets. Some of those who had completed their schooling had been educated for farm employment, but a large number consisted of young persons who had not completed their high school education. Also, those youths who remained in rural areas had to sharpen their skills. Lack of training, coupled with discrimination, resulted in high unemployment rates for nonwhite youths. Community resources in urban centers for training these disadvantaged young persons are often inadequate and do not prepare them for the new types of jobs found in large cities.

YOUNG MARRIED WORKERS

Young persons are marrying and having children at an earlier age than did their parents. One-half of all males married in 1962 were less than 23 years old. The median age of all females married in that year was 20. In March 1962, about 230,000 young men in the 14-19 age group were married, and of this number, 95 percent were in the labor force. This rate of labor force participation was about three times greater than for single males in the 14-19 age group, many of whom were enrolled in school.

Incomes of many of the young married men were inadequate, even for subsistence living. More than 700,000 nonfarm families, with family heads below the age of 25, had total money income of less than $3,000 in 1961. Many of these young breadwinners are forced by circumstances to concern themselves more with immediate economic needs than with developing their future careers. They use whatever skills and knowledge they possess to make a living rather than devote their efforts to developing their full potential through training.

Because of the changing pattern of greater labor force participation of married women, many young married women now concerned with the immediate problems of raising families will reenter the labor market when their children are in school. From 1947 to 1962, the number of married women in the labor force doubled, accounting for more than half of total labor force growth. The expected continuation of this trend will require that special attention be devoted

to the training needs of young women. If young married women are not adequately prepared with knowledge and skills, they will find it increasingly difficult to secure employment when they reenter the labor market.

THE IOWA DROPOUT STUDY

The findings of the dropout study in Iowa High Schools are reported in some detail because of the clear definitions, statistics and description of characteristics given in this study. 3/

DEFINITION

In this study, a "persister" was defined as a youth who entered the ninth grade in the fall of 1950, 1951 or 1952 and who graduated from the same high school at some later date. A dropout was defined as a youth who entered the ninth grade in September of 1950, 1951 or 1952 and who failed to graduate from that school and did not enroll in any other educational institution. Students who died during their high school career were excluded from the study.

To satisfy the requirement for a comprehensive study, only schools which administered the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) to their ninth-grade classes in the years 1950, 1951 and 1952 were included.

SCHOOL SAMPLE

The school sample was described as follows: Because of the very large proportion of small high schools in Iowa (approximately 59 percent enroll fewer than 100 students) and because of the need to determine differences, if any, in holding power of schools of different size, the sampling of schools could not approach true proportions since the number of large schools in this type of sample would have been too small to make comparisons and to permit generalizations. The size groups employed in the study were: Group I, 10-99; Group II, 100-249; Group III, 250-499; and Group IV, 500 and over.

Although the small high schools in the Iowa study retained a higher average proportion of their entering ninth grade students than did the large high schools, these differences are more apparent than real because of the wide variations in dropout rates among schools in the same size group. The nine schools enrolling 500 or more students lost an average of 25 percent of their entering ninth grade students as compared with an average loss of only 13 percent in the 32 high schools enrolling from 10 to 99 students. But two of the large schools lost only from 16 to 18 percent and two of the small schools lost between 24 and 27 percent. The 17 Schools in Group II also had an average loss of 13 percent.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND SCHOLASTIC FACTORS

There is no evidence in this study indicating that students from small schools are less intelligent or achieve less well, on the average, than students from large schools. To say that students from small schools achieve as well, on the average, as students from large schools on the ITED is not equivalent, however, to saying that small schools are meeting the needs of students as well as are large schools. It can only be said that small schools, on the

average, appear to be teaching the academic content and skills measured by the ITED as well as the large schools. This simply substantiates a statement which professional educators have been making for some time, namely, that the size of a school cannot, by itself, be taken as an indicator of the quality of instruction which students attending that school receive. There are very poor and very good small schools as well as very poor and very good large schools.

In view of the importance of intellectual factors as indicators of school persistence, it is disturbing to find that, among the 165 students in the overall sample with measured I. Q.'s of 120 or above, 29, or 18 percent, were dropouts.

NONSCHOLASTIC FACTORS

The nonscholastic factors investigated were absenteeism, extracurricular participation, residence with parents or persons other than parents, marital status of parents, occupational class of father, employment of mother outside the home, educational attainment of parents, and overageness. A total of 768 dropouts were compared with the same number of randomly selected graduates or persisters to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups of youth with respect to these nonscholastic characteristics.

The average rate of absenteeism for dropouts was 8.5 percent, or fifteen days out of a 180-day school year, whereas the average rate for persisters was 3.1 percent. Twenty-two percent of the dropouts and 11 percent of the graduates came from broken homes. The proportion of parents of dropouts failing to complete high school was much greater than that of parents of persisters. Neither parent in 67 percent of the dropout cases had graduated from high school; the corresponding figure for persisters was 38 percent. In 85 percent of the dropout cases at least one parent had not graduated from high school, but this was true for only 57 percent of the persisters. When the occupations of dropouts and of a random sample of persisters were classified on a seven-point scale ranging from professional to unskilled labor, the chances were nine to one that a child of an unskilled laborer would drop out as compared with the child of a professional man.

The average age of all of the ninth-grade dropouts in this study was 16 years and 4 months, whereas the normal age for students completing the ninth grade is 15 years and 6 months. The dropouts, as a group, were overage for their grade at time of withdrawal; 66 percent of the students withdrawing in the ninth grade were overage and 34 percent of those withdrawing in the twelfth grade were overage. Students who are retarded a year of more when they enter the ninth grade are likely prospects for withdrawal before graduation.

A large majority of boys (69 percent) who dropped out of high school did so in the ninth or tenth grades, while more girls (60 percent) dropped out in the tenth and eleventh grades than at the other grade level. Sixty-four percent of all dropouts occurred in grades nine and ten and only 36 percent occurred in grades eleven and twelve.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOL FACTORS AND HOLDING POWER

The relationship between the program of studies, the guidance program, the extracurricular activity program, teacher morale, pupil morale, the physical plant and a total rating, and the holding power of schools in each of the size groups were studied. The size groups were studied independently, since the study was concerned with the effect of these factors in schools with the high holding power and low holding power rates rather than with the effect of size. Within each size group, schools having the highest and lowest rates of holding power--the top and lowest thirds were used-- were compared for the seven characteristics cited at the beginning of this paragraph.

In Group I schools there were no significant differences between schools with high holding power and low holding power with respect to the several aspects of the school program. In Group II the total rating was in favor of schools with holding power as were the ratings on guidance, extracurricular activities, teacher morale and student morale. The picture for Group III schools was much the same as for Group II.

The total rating and the ratings on program of studies, extracurricular, teacher morale and physical plant were in favor of the high one-third of schools in holding power in Group IV.

THE PROCESS OF DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

This study established clearly the theory that dropping out of the secondary school was the culmination of a process and not just a simple event. The process began much earlier than the day the student actually withdrew from school. Dropping out of school involved the interaction of predisposing, precipitating, and counteracting forces in the student's environment with similar forces existing within the general personality makeup of the student.

Six major types of predisposing factors were associated with dropping out of school: (1) school too difficult, (2) lack of acceptance, (3) disruptive home situation, (4) financial need, (5) school program inadequate, and (6) engagement and/or marriage. In all but 14 cases, one of these factors operated as a major predisposing force. Fortunately, for at least five out of six major predisposing forces, the secondary school is in a position to take some constructive action.

In almost every case some precipitating factor was associated with dropping out of school. Many of these had to do with incidents taking place in school. If, as other parts of this total investigation have shown, potential dropouts could be identified early in their school career, conscious attempts could be made on the part of school personnel to avoid contributing to a student's withdrawal from school.

In only a minority of cases did students report having talked with any school personnel prior to withdrawing from the secondary school. Certainly, this is a condition which need not exist. If measuring instruments are inadequate in a given school for identifying a potential dropout, there still re-

mains the possibility of talking with each student concerning the desirability of completing his secondary school education.

LOUISIANA RURAL DROPOUTS

The aim of a recent study 4/ in rural Louisiana was to determine and describe the factors in differential school attainment in rural areas.

The specific objectives of this study were: (1) to determine the factors affecting the school attendance and attainment of rural youth; (2) to determine the life aspirations of rural youths, and evaluate the extent to which the educational facilities are serving these aspirations; and (3) to develop information that could be used by various public and private agencies to improve school attendance and attainment levels, and educational facilities in rural areas.

The study was conducted in two parishes (counties), Avoyelles, in South Central Louisiana, and, Franklin, in North Central Louisiana. Both of these parishes are "pilot counties" in the Rural Development Program. Interviews were conducted with juniors and seniors in four carefully selected white rural high schools in each of the study parishes and with the dropouts from these schools in the same age group (16-19 years) as the juniors and seniors. The parents of both groups of youngsters were interviewed to determine whether parental and family influence related significantly to the problem under study. Interviews were obtained in January, February, and March, 1959, with 125 parents of youths in school, with 68 parents of youths who had dropped out of school, and with equal numbers of youth in each category.

The largest number dropped out of school because of what could be termed "lack of interest." Over half of the girls interviewed left school because of marriage, making marriage the ranking reason for leaving school. Others left school because they were needed at home, for "financial reasons," or for health reasons.

It is clear that rural youths from low income areas generally drop out of school because of lack of interest or motivation. Other data confirms this conclusion. Three-fifths of the boys and one-half of the girls did not regret leaving school, and over two-thirds of the boys and almost three-fourths of the girls reported that nothing would have kept them in school. The basic problem of these dropouts is, therefore, their apathy toward education, often unwittingly developed by their parents.

The authors of this study conclude that:

"Findings of this study leave little doubt that educational attainment in rural areas (as well as urban areas) is closely related to environmental factors, and is a two-fold problem of social adjustment. This phenomenon is explained in terms of the theoretical concept of the social system. Each family and each school is an ongoing system with certain goals and value orientations and certain norms of expected behavior. In the first instance, the family as a social system sets certain standards of behavior for its members. To be adjusted, family members must internalize the values of the family. Those members who subscribe to a different set of values tend to become suspect and to be

regarded as misfits. Since everyone strives to "belong," especially in his family group, it is easy to see how there is little or no incentive for youths in some homes to continue schooling. To be too ambitious in this direction is to appear to want to become "better" than one's family, etc. Conversely, in a family that stresses education as a value, a "good" adjustment is one that includes high educational attainment. In this instance, dropping out of school represents a maladjustment.

"The second adjustment problem centers in the school situation. Again, it is a matter of feeling wanted and secure. Where distance prevents close ties with the school, or where standards of behavior are expected or demanded which are strange to certain youngsters, they will adjust by dropping out of school as soon as possible.

"A starting place for action programs is suggested by the finding that negative educational values in rural homes are largely responsible for biasing the educational opportunities of youth. Perhaps more attention should be devoted to "selling" education to rural families. Certainly, it makes as much sense to promote the education of youth, as a human resource, as it does to encourage practices leading to higher yields of crops and livestock. At the same time, school officals should be made acutely aware of the special handicaps of children from lower-income homes. These are not easy solutions."

MARYLAND FOLLOW-UP OF DROPOUTS

During 1960-61, counselors in the public schools in each of the 24 local school systems in the State of Maryland 5/ gathered data from a representative sample of pupils who withdrew from school before graduation. Based on this sample, 13,715 pupils dropped out of school during the year ending June 30, 1961. The focus of this study was on the reasons for withdrawal and on the characteristics of the pupils who dropped out.

Of the causes summarized under 16 headings, the one listed most frequently was lack of interest. This cause accounted for 35 percent of the dropouts investigated. Lack of success accounted for 18 percent, and economic reasons other than the costs of going to school amounted to 10 percent. Marriage and pregnancy represented another 15 percent. Together, these four reasons were given by 78 percent of the dropouts.

All other reasons, if considered separately, would be insignificant. But there is the paradox in the Maryland study: Lack of interest and lack of success constituted more than half the reasons given for dropping out of school, yet only one percent listed lack of a suitable program as the reasons for leaving school.

The relative frequencies of different causes did not differ significantly for dropouts in the four school enrollment sizes from 500 or fewer students to over 1,500 students.

HARLAN COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Several state, county, and local school systems where there has been a noticeable decline in the population and economy since the 1950 Census have studied what effects this has had on the school dropout problem. A report by one of these counties, Harlan County, Kentucky, 6/ contains several forthright statements and findings on this problem.

The section reporting on school dropouts begins by asking whether the student or the school fails. If students are not held to high standards, the school program deteriorates and becomes "watered down" for all students. However, if the school is for students it will take them as they are and do the best it can for them.

Harlan County's overall dropout rate is higher than the national and state averages but below those of neighboring counties, calculated on the ratio of number in the first grade to the number in high school graduating class twelve years later.

On the other hand, there is good reason to mistrust these figures as an index to the holding power of the schools. It is amazing that the holding power has been so high, for in the decade between 1950 and 1960, the County's total population dropped from some 72,000 to 51,000. This means that whole families were moving out of the County--and the decline in enrollments was inevitable, regardless of the holding power of the school.

It is regrettable that the cause of this exodus of people--the faltering economy--may also be a result. The problem appears to "chase its own tail." Certainly it is paradoxical that thousands are unemployed in the County while the demand for skilled and educated people generally, even in Harlan County, (for teachers, for example) is high. School dropouts aggravate the situation. Of 132 dropouts who returned questionnaires, most gave "dislike school" as their reason for leaving. The next commonest reason given was "school is too expensive." Of the 132, 88 said they still lived in Harlan County--and 59 of these reported being unemployed at the time. It seems reasonable to assume that the dropouts, as a group, are an economic liability rather than an asset to the county, at least for some time after they leave school.

Obviously, some dropouts are inevitable. Health problems, sickness at home, and the like were reported in several cases; a declining economy, poverty, and sickness go hand in hand; and low levels of education and unemployment contribute to the cycle. The study reports:

"Schools have almost no direct way of modifying the home and community patterns in such matters. But, if the school can so absorb a student that he becomes a part of it, loses himself in its various activities, and measures his own achievements in terms of the standards it provides, he is not likely to drop out. Again, on the other hand, schools operating on limited budgets cannot be expected to provide the varied programs which would satisfy the needs of some youngsters, nor the guidance aids to direct them into courses and activities where they fit.

"In fact, one of our meanest and most crucial problems is how we can hold the weak and faltering student in school without 'watering down' the program so that it is no longer challenging to the bright and eager student --especially when our resources are limited.

"Even the easing of economic pressure on the prospective dropout student poses a problem. If we remove all fees, for typing, laboratory, locker, and the like, will the student learn to respect property, to value his education, and to be economically self-reliant? Will making school 'cheaper' help keep him in school, by removing a major cause of dropouts--but by doing so encourage a notion that life is a 'free ride'?

"Our answer is not simple: The problem concerns the home, the support the school gets or fails to get from parents and citizens generally, and the school itself which must stand firm on certain standards and yet bend itself to the needs of boys and girls."

DROPOUTS AMONG RURAL PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH

Through a research project designed to identify the personal and social factors associated with varying amounts of formal education of more than 2,000 young adults reared in rural areas of Pennsylvania, 7/ a number of significant findings relating to the characteristics of school dropouts were discovered.

METHOD OF COLLECTING DATA

This report was based on a ten-year study of rural youth migration and adjustment to adulthood. The sample, selected in 1947, consisted of members of sophomore classes from 74 rural high schools in Pennsylvania.

Schools were selected from the State's fourth class school district population. Because of this, no school was situated in a population center of more than 2,500 persons.

Interviews produced complete schedules for 2,344 or 80 percent of the original 2,810 cases. Statistical tests showed no significant bias as a result of the loss. The 1957 sample was composed of 45 percent males and 55 percent females.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Fifteen percent of the sample did not finish high school. Thirty-nine percent terminated their formal education with high school graduation. Thirty-one percent engaged in some post high school training of less than college level. Fifteen percent attended or graduated from colleges or universities.

In the case of males, lack of interest was the most frequently mentioned reason for dropping out of high school; while for females, being needed at home was most frequently mentioned.

To a slight extent farm-reared youths in the Pennsylvania study were less likely to continue their formal education than those from rural nonfarm areas.

The number of years of parents' schooling was related to the amount of education of their offspring. The occupation of the father also was related to the continuing education of the child. Higher occupational aspirations were related to continuing education.

Among the high school dropouts and terminal high school graduates, the parents wanted their sons to operate farms in greater proportion than the boys aspired to farming. This was not the case for those young men who went to college.

Throughout the study, evidence accumulated in support of the proposition that dropping from high school or going on to college were responses to a pattern of differentially valued status-giving factors impressing themselves in the lives of young people. The study also indicated that a significant amount of human talent is being set aside without gaining access to the complete public school educational program, not to mention the fact that college attracts only a minority of the young people.

A TEN-YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF EASTERN KENTUCKY YOUTH

A ten-year follow-up study of youth in Eastern Kentucky 8/ examined the extent to which rural school dropouts are disadvantaged in comparison with the rural high school graduate and whether graduation from high school is more of an advantage if the youth remains in a rural area or if he moves to an urban center.

The population selected was males who were enrolled in the eighth grade during the school year 1949-1950 in 11 rural counties of Eastern Kentucky. Of the 757 boys enrolled in this grade in 1950 only 307 (41 percent) could be reached for personal interview. An additional 104 responded to a mailed questionnaire.

The educational level of the young men was low, as was their parents. Almost 90 percent of the parents had dropped out of school before completing the twelfth grade, and about 80 percent had received eight years or less of formal schooling. More than half the young men (55 percent) had dropped out of school before finishing the twelfth grade and, among these, the larger proportion had received only eight years of formal education. Of those who finished high school, nearly one-third entered college, but only 12 men completed four years of higher education.

At the time of interview, half the young men (51 percent) were living in the Eastern Kentucky area, and the remainder were living in urban centers of Southern Ohio (40 percent) or other parts of Kentucky (9 percent). Approximately equal proportions of school dropouts and high school graduates were living in urban communities (51 and 47 percent, respectively).

The men interviewed were of an age to be fairly well established in their work and family careers. The median age was 25 years. Four out of five were married, and almost all of these had one child or more.

Significant facts such as the following were reported:

"Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, high school graduates, in contrast to school dropouts had been more successful in achieving the higher status jobs, held higher job aspirations, expressed stronger intentions to do something to achieve their aspirations, participated more often in community organizations, and held a more optimistic mental outlook about the world and their place in it. In contrast, significantly more of the school dropouts than of the high school graduates living in Eastern Kentucky indicated that they would do things differently if they could start life over. The principal change they wanted was to get more formal education.

"Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, no significant differences were found between school dropouts and high school graduates in: satisfaction with their work, desire to change jobs, achievement orientation, rates of unemployment, annual income, ratings of their communities, migration intentions, reasons for wanting to move or in their estimation of how much formal education a young man needs nowadays."

"Among the men who had moved to urban centers, school dropouts differed significantly from high school graduates on the following comparisons: high school graduates, compared with school dropouts in the urban centers, had a more confident and optimistic outlook about the world, and substantially more of the high school graduates than of the school dropouts who had moved to urban centers maintained that a college education was needed by young men today. More of the school dropouts than of the high school graduates in the urban centers said they would do things differently if they could start life over, and the principal change would be to get more formal education.

"No significant differences were found between the school dropouts and the high school graduates who had moved to urban centers in: occupational achievements, job satisfactions, the wish to change jobs, achievement orientation, job aspirations, motivation to achieve their aspirations, rates of unemployment, annual income, membership in community organizations, ratings of their communities, migration intentions, or in their reasons for wanting to move.

"A reasonable inference from these data is that the rural school system of Eastern Kentucky appears able to prepare young men for adult roles in the rural areas, but that it is not so well equipped to prepare youth for employment in urban areas.

"The men in this study held common values of American society about career achievement. However, there appear to be some contradictions between their achievement orientation and the translation of these values into actual job aspirations. Only modest proportions of the men aspired to jobs of higher status than their present job levels. Perhaps they lacked knowledge about the jobs which could provide the means of improving their level of living."

DISCUSSION

In light of findings presented in this paper, topics of the following nature might be considered:

How do rates of dropouts in rural areas compare with those in urban areas?

What state or regional variations in dropout rates are there and how significant are these?

Should schools in rural areas prepare their pupils primarily for job in urban areas?

What criteria should the school administrators in rural areas follow to determine the best curriculum for rural youth?

What appear to be some of the most significant rural-urban educational and status differences?

In terms of the evidence presented, what seem to be outstanding differences in characteristics between the rural and urban school dropouts?

Parents of rural youth often place little value on education and school achievement. What types of acculturation programs such as the higher horizons programs in New York City might be promoted for parents in rural areas to raise their goals and perspective?

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